

Message Text

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TAGS: MASS, US, SO

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS OF SOMALI ASSURANCES TO U.S.,
CHAPIN NOMINATION AS US AMBASSADOR TO ETHIOPIA

1. FOLLOWING FOR POSTS INFORMATION IS TEXT OF REUTERS ITEM
REPORTING SOMALI ASSURANCES TO U.S. THAT IT WILL NOT
RESORT TO FORCE TO CHANGE ITS BORDERS, AND PRESS GUIDANCE
PROVIDED TO DEPARTMENT SPOKESMEN ON WHICH POSTS SHOULD
DRAW IN RESPONDING TO LOCAL QUERIES ON THIS SUBJECT.
(QUESTION DID NOT ARISE AT DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING MAY 25).

2. REUTERS REPORT:

UNITED NATIONS, MAY 24, REUTER - SOMALIA TODAY TOLD THE
UNITED STATES IT WOULD NOT RESORT TO FORCE IN SEEKING ANY
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FUTURE CHANGE OF ITS BORDERS, A SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT
OFFICIAL SAID HERE.

THE ASSURANCE WAS GIVEN TO SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE
BY SOMALI FOREIGN MINISTER ABDURAHMAN JAMA BARRE, THE
OFFICIAL SAID.

HE SAID SOMALIA WOULD PUBLICLY STATE THIS POSITION AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE.

THE OFFICIAL SAID THIS ASSURANCE WENT FARTHER THAN SOMALIA HAD EVER GONE IN THE PAST AND IT WOULD HELP CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPLY DEFENSIVE WEAPONS TO THAT COUNTRY.

SOMALIA INTERVENED IN ETHIOPIA'S SOUTHEASTERN OGADEN REGION IN SUPPORT OF SECESSIONIST INSURGENTS UNTIL HOSTILITIES CEASED IN MID-MARCH.

SOMALIA HAS HISTORICALLY CLAIMED THE OGADEN REGION AS WELL AS PART OF NORTHERN KENYA AS PART OF "GREATER SOMALIA."

BUT THE OFFICIAL TOLD REPORTERS HERE TODAY: "THEY'RE PREPARED TO STATE THAT THEY WILL NOT SEEK TO CHANGE THEIR BORDERS BY FORCE."

THE UNITED STATES HAS SOUGHT AN ASSURANCE OF THIS KIND EVER SINCE THE MAJOR HOSTILITIES ENDED IN THE OGADEN.

A SOMALI PUBLIC STATEMENT RENOUNCING THE USE OF FORCE IN SUPPORT OF ITS HISTORICAL TERRITORIAL CLAIMS WOULD NOT ONLY OPEN THE WAY TO A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA.
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IT WOULD ALSO GIVE IMPRESSIVE SUPPORT TO THE AMERICAN CONTENTION THAT CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE NO NEED TO MAINTAIN THEIR COMBINED TOTAL OF SOME 16,000 MILITARY ADVISERS IN ETHIOPIA.

THE ETHIOPIANS INVITED CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION TO SEND THE ADVISERS TO DEFEAT THE SOMALI-BACKED INSURGENCY, AND THE UNITED STATES IS NOW CONCERNED THAT THE CUBANS MIGHT BECOME INVOLVED IN ETHIOPIA'S BATTLE AGAINST ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS IN THE NORTH.

MR. VANCE ALSO MET ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FELEKE GEDLE-GIORGIS TODAY AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT ETHIOPIA WOULD AGREE TO THE AMERICAN NOMINATION OF FREDERIC CHAPIN AS THE U.S. AMBASSADOR, THE OFFICIAL SAID. MR. CHAPIN WILL FILL THE POST WHICH HAS BEEN VACANT SINCE JULY 1976.

THE ETHIOPIAN MINISTER SAID THAT CUBANS WERE NOT INVOLVED MILITARILY IN ERITREA, REPORTERS WERE TOLD. HE SAID THIS WAS A PROBLEM THAT ETHIOPIA INTENDED TO RESOLVE BY ITSELF

THROUGH PEACEFUL MEANS IF POSSIBLE.

THE ETHIOPIAN OFFENSIVE WHICH BEGAN LAST WEEK AGAINST THE ERITREAN REBELS WAS INTENDED TO PROVIDE "SOME MORE ELBOW

ROOM" IN AND AROUND ASMARA, THE ERITREAN PROVINCIAL CAPITAL, AND THE PORT CITY OF MASSAWA, REPORTERS WERE TOLD.

THE SENIOR U.S. OFFICIAL SAID THAT, ACCORDING TO AMERICAN INFORMATION, THE CUBANS HAVE A FORCE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED IN ASMARA, PERFORMING A KIND OF POLICE ROLE, BUT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE SO FAR THAT THEY WERE INVOLVED IN COMBAT.

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3. PRESS GUIDANCE:

Q. CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT THE U.S. HAS RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM SOMALIA THAT SOMALIA WILL NOT USE FORCE IN SEEKING TO CHANGE ITS BORDERS?

A. WE HAVE HAD LENGTHY AND PRODUCTIVE EXCHANGES WITH THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS REGARDING THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF U.S.-SOMALI RELATIONS AND PARTICULARLY PRESIDENT CARTER'S REQUEST AS A CONDITION FOR EXPANDED U.S. AID THAT THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT GIVE US ASSURANCES THAT IT WILL NOT DISHONOR ITS BORDERS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. DURING THE COURSE OF THESE EXCHANGES, THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED US THAT IT WILL NOT RESORT TO FORCE AGAINST ANY OTHER COUNTRY EXCEPT FOR THE DEFENSE OF ITS OWN INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED TERRITORY. WE BELIEVE THESE ARE IMPORTANT ASSURANCES. WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT OUR CONTINUING DIALOG WITH SOMALIA WILL MAKE A REAL CONTRIBUTION TO GREATER LONG-RUN STABILITY IN THE HORN REGION. HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT YET IN A POSITION TO MAKE ANY DETAILED ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THIS TIME.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES ON REPORTED CHAPIN NOMINATION AS U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ETHIOPIA, YOU SHOULD SAY THAT CONFIRMATION OF THIS REPORT CAN ONLY COME FROM WHITE HOUSE, WHICH ANNOUNCES ALL AMBASSADORIAL NOMINATIONS. VANCE

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